The Flyleaf

Friends of Fondren Library Vol. 54, No. 1 Winter 2005

Malcolm and Elizabeth Gillis Honored at Friends of Fondren Gala XXIV

A Letter to Friends

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Friends of Fondren Board and as President. It is a privilege to attempt to communicate the needs and developments at the Fondren Library to this community which uses and supports the library in all its 21st Century attributes. The past year has seen the opening of the Library Service Center, which is Fondren's remotely located, state of the art storage and retrieval system for materials amenable to slightly delayed access. It improves Fondren's overall function as an archive by rationalizing the use of our necessarily limited on-campus space. The current year will see the beginning of the renovation plan for the Fondren Library's on-campus structure, creating in some sense a central atrium for encounters among the diverse elements of our campus. The next year, and years, will continue the Fondren Library's function as an atelier for ideas on the Rice campus. Every member of the Rice community, past, present, and future, is in relationship with the Fondren Library, whether needed, nurturing, or neglected. The Friends of Fondren, through its membership and the opportunities it creates for members and non-members alike, works every year to improve those relationships for everyone.

I would particularly like to recognize our 2003-04 departing board members John Brice, Preston Frazier, and Bob Patten for their service and contributions over the years, and our new board members Cathy Matusow, Ed Whalen, and Amy Taylor for their energetic plunge into the opportunities of 2004-05. I would also like to thank our library leadership, Charles Henry and Sara Lowman, for their generosity of time and insight which continually fuels and informs the enthusiasm of both the faculty and non-faculty Board members, and of the membership generally, of the Friends of Fondren.

Sincerely,

Robins Brice

Fondren Library

Founded under the charter of the university dated May 18, 1891, the library was established in 1913. Its present building was dedicated November 4, 1949, and rededicated in 1969 after a substantial addition, both made possible by gifts of Ella F. Fondren, her children, and the Fondren Foundation and Trust as a tribute to Walter William Fondren. The library celebrated its half-millionth volume in 1965 and its one-millionth volume on April 22, 1979.

The Friends

The Friends of Fondren Library was founded in 1950 as an association of library supporters interested in increasing and making better known the resources of Fondren Library at Rice University. The Friends, through members' contributions and sponsorship of a program of memorials and honor gifts, secure gifts and bequests, and provide funds for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts, and other materials that are needed to support teaching and research at the university.

The Flyleaf

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Friends Honor 2004 Rice Authors with Program and Reception

BY MICHELLE E. HICKS

On February 6, 2005, the Friends of Fondren celebrated a Super Sunday by honoring Rice faculty, staff, alumni and Friends of Fondren who published or edited books or journals, exhibited works of art in a one-person show, or composed musical works during the preceding year. In the Kyle Morrow Room at Fondren Library, the Friends recognized those honorees in attendance and enjoyed presentations by three authors: Bala Dharan, Joyce Pounds Hardy and Tommy LaVergne. In keeping with the theme of collaboration, each of the panelists published a collaborative work and described the creative process involved. The works discussed covered a range of interests from poetry and photography to corporate malfeasance and accounting intrigue. Edward Whalen, the retired comptroller of the University of Houston and a member of the board of directors of the Friends of Fondren, welcomed the attendees and served as moderator for the program.

Bala Dharan received his Ph.D. in management from Carnegie Mellon University in 1981 and has been a professor in the Jones School of Management for over 20 years. He explained the process of collaborating on *Enron: Corporate Fiascos and Their Implications* with Nancy Rapoport, Dean of the University of Houston Law School and Rice alumna, then turned to the approach they took on the book, preferring to write a scholarly work that could be used for teaching, rather than the more journalistic books that were rushed into print following the collapse of Enron. His description of the personalities involved and the intricacies of editing the various articles in the book led to a spirited question and answer session on libel issues and potential involvement in the ongoing Enron trials, as well as the current status of accounting controls and regulation.

Christopher Dow, Jane Chance, Joyce Pounds Hardy, Tommy LaVergne

Joyce Pounds Hardy, Rice alumna, and University Photographer Tommy LaVergne collaborated on *Roads to Forgotten Texas*, a compilation of photography and poetry representing the feeling and ethos of small-town Texas. The authors presented a number of beautiful photographs and corresponding poems, which evoked for many in the room memories of growing up in such towns. The authors also shared the process of creating the book, from concept through collaboration, execution and publication.

Following the individual presentations and a question and answer period, the panelists and audience adjourned to the Lovett

Lounge for refreshments and continued conversation.

That Rice is both a great teaching and research institution is evidenced by the scholarly output of its faculty, staff, friends and alumni showcased each year for the Friends of Fondren Library. The Friends will again honor Rice authors, artists and composers with a presentation and reception open to the entire Rice community in February 2006.

Bala Dharan, Joyce Pounds Hardy, Tommy LaVergne, Edward Whalen

2004 Rice Authors

Michael Achard	*Language, Culture, and Mind*, ed.
Alexei E. Angelides	*Essays on the History of the Philosophy of Mathematics*, ed.
Yildiz Bayazitoglu	*International Journal of Thermal Sciences*, ed.
Logan Browning	*SEL, Studies in English Literature*, ed.
Jane Chance	*J.R.R. Tolkien and the Invention of Myth: A Reader*, ed.
	The Library of Medieval Women (five titles), general editor
	Guides to Historic Events in the Medieval World (seven titles), series editor
Eileen Coppola	*Powering Up – Learning to Teach Well with Technology*
Justin Cronin	*The Summer Guest*
Bala Dharan	*Enron: Corporate Fiascos and Their Implications*
Christopher Dow	*Sallyport*, ed.
John Eliot	*Overachievement: The New Model for Exceptional Performance*
Jennifer George and G.R. Jones	*Essentials of Contemporary Management*
John Graves	*Myself and Strangers: A Memoir of Apprenticeship*
Joyce Pounds Hardy	*Roads to Forgotten Texas*
Eva Hoffman	*After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust*
Dean James	*Decorated to Death*
Suzanne Kemmer	*Language, Culture, and Mind*, ed.
Fouad M. Khoury	*Multistage Separation Processes*
Sydney M. Lamb	*Language and Reality*
Tommy LaVergne	*Roads to Forgotten Texas*

Michael Maas	*The West – Encounters and Transformations*, Vol. C
K Krueger McDonald	*SEL, Studies in English Literature*, ed.
Angelo Miele	*Advanced Design Problems in Aerospace Engineering*, Vol. 1, ed.
A. G. Mikos	*Tissue Engineering*, ed.
David Minter	*Faulkner's Questioning Narratives*, pb edition
Elizabeth Moon	*Marque and Reprisal*
Atieno Odhiambo and David William Cohen	*Risks of Knowledge: Investigations into the Death of the Honorable Minister John Robert Ouko in Kenya*, 1990
Robert L. Patten	*SEL, Studies in English Literature*, ed.
Anthony Pinn	*African American Humanist Principles*
	Loving the Body: Black Religious Studies and the Erotic, ed.
Nancy Rapoport	*Enron: Corporate Fiascos and Their Implications*
Patricia Reiff	*Mars Update* (with Colin Law)
	Earth Update (with Colin Law)
	Space Update (with Colin Law)
Rafael Salaberry	*Impresiones, Annotated Instructors' Edition*
David J. Schneider	*The Psychology of Stereotyping*
Brent Smith	*Personality and Organizations*
Edward Snow	*Sonnets to Orpheus*
Uwe Steiner	*Walter Benjamin*
Mary Ellis Taylor	*George MacDonald Exposes False Conflicts: Jesus/God, Justice/Mercy, Science/Religion*
Mary Dodson Wade	*Joan Lowery Nixon*
	Presidents' Day: Honoring the Birthdays of Washington and Lincoln
Martin Wiener	*Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness and Criminal Justice in Victorian England*
Linda Williams	*Earth Science Demystified*
	Mighty Machines (six titles)

2004 Friends Distinguished Guest Lecture

On October 10, a beautiful Sunday afternoon, noted poet Billy Collins appeared as the eleventh Distinguished Guest Lecturer of the Friends of Fondren Library. Mr. Collins read from his work, intermittently made comments (perhaps more appropriately called asides), then answered questions from the audience.

Billy Collins

A previous Distinguished Guest Lecturer, Horton Foote, shared with the Friends in 2001 his ultimate advice to the would-be playwright: "Read, especially poetry and not just single poems, but a poet's entire body of work." Reading the poetry of Billy Collins is such a delightful way to heed Mr. Foote's advice, whether one is an aspiring playwright or a casual reader.

Charles Maynard, event chairman, introduced Mr. Collins as our first poet in the Distinguished Guest Lecture series. He noted that Mr. Collins first came to poetry in high school and has now published seven collections of poetry, the last three producing record sales.

In June 2001, Billy Collins was appointed United States Poet Laureate 2001-2003. In January 2004, he was named New York Poet Laureate 2004-2006. He has published seven collections of poetry, including *The Art of Drowning, Picnic, Lightning*, and *Questions About Angels*, which was selected by Edward Hirsch for the National Poetry Series. His work has appeared in *The New Yorker, The Paris Review* and *The American Scholar.* He is a Guggenheim fellow and a New York Public Library "Literary Lion." One of his poems was selected for *The Best American Poetry 1992* and another was included in *The Best American Poetry 1993.* He is a professor of English at Lehman College of the City University of New York.

Billy Collins began the program by informing the audience that he would read some poems—"the thing I do best when I'm on stage." He then delighted the large crowd with something he had written on the airplane that very morning, "The Flying Notebook." He offered a wide variety of his poetry throughout the program, switching next to "The Revenant," written in the voice of the dog you had put to sleep. The dog speaks from his new, unearthly home and notes that

...everyone here can read and write

the dogs in poetry, the cats and the others in prose.

Mr. Collins, who has been described as the "indoor nature poet," read of dogs, cats, mice, canoes, water, love and nostalgia. When asked by a member of the audience how he knows when he is at the end of a poem, he said, "My poems are little imaginative journeys. I know it's over when it has arrived." He cautioned that it is dangerous when a poet gets close to the end—better to write a throw-away ending than an explosive one.

He was also asked what was interesting about being Poet Laureate of the United States. He replied:

1. starting Poetry 180 in high schools, which he likened to dropping poetry behind enemy lines.
2. reading the elegy for 9/11 to a joint session of Congress during which one senator was either rapt or asleep.
3. dancing with Kim Cattrall.
4. occupying a beautiful office with a balcony overlooking the Capitol. He dryly pointed out that no one knew the office was there or that he was there either, and the phone didn't ring during his two-year tenure.

After the reading, Mr. Collins graciously signed books for those waiting in a long, long line. The great success of this program would indicate that while Mr. Collins was our first poet, he might not be our last.

Malcolm and Elizabeth Gillis Honored at Friends of Fondren Gala

On Saturday, March 27, 2004, the Friends of Fondren Library paid tribute to Elizabeth and Malcolm Gillis, upon his retirement as Rice University's sixth president. The twenty-fourth annual gala benefited the Special Collections Endowment of Fondren Library.

Gala co-chairs were the past presidents who led the Friends during Dr. Gillis's tenure as president, which began in 1993. Texas Anderson, Roxanne Shaw Apple, Lucas T. Elliot, Elizabeth Kidd, Charles Maynard, Sally Reynolds, and Karen Rogers led a committee that planned and planned and planned, decorated, and implemented the most successful gala ever. Committee members were Iris Ballew, Kyle Frazier, Michelle Hicks, Elsa Daniels Horlock, Lee Seureau, Pamela Smith Devine, and Mary Ellen Wilson.

The committee chose The Intercontinental Hotel for the 2004 event. The silent auction items were displayed in a special room which provided greater visibility and access. Rice sports memorabilia, dinners at fine restaurants, framed art, tickets to cultural events, books, decorative items, and much more were on display. After perusing and bidding, guests entered the ballroom, decorated with orchid plants chosen by Mary Ellen Wilson.

University Librarian Charles Henry introduced Peggy and Bill Barnett whose remarks about the honorees were both warm and personal. Friends of Fondren President Robins Brice presented special gifts to Malcolm and Elizabeth—framed pen-and-ink drawings by well-known graphic artist Rolf Laub.

After dinner, stalwart auctioneers Bucky Allshouse and John Wolf helped to raise a record $29,000 in the live auction. They were assisted by Roxanne Shaw Apple, Dr. Robert Patten, and Cathryn Rodd Selman.

Honorees Malcolm & Elizabeth Gillis with Bill Barnett

The gala program contained the following tribute to Malcolm and Elizabeth Gillis:

Rice University and Fondren Library have found extraordinary friends in Malcolm and Elizabeth Gillis. In the 11 years since Dr. Gillis took office as the sixth president of Rice, the guidance, commitment, and support that he and Mrs. Gillis have provided have not only helped elevate Rice in stature but have been decisive forces in recreating Rice as a university for the 21st century.

Leading President Gillis's outstanding accomplishments was the development and implementation of the first strategic plan spearheaded by a Rice president since the early 1960s. Concurrent with its approval by the Rice Board of Trustees, the plan received resounding support when the Hobby Foundation designated a $21.4 million endowment for improvements to Fondren—one of the largest gifts ever made to a library anywhere. Subsequently, the strategic plan became the platform that launched the Rice: The Next Century Campaign—the first major comprehensive campaign in the university's history.

Facilities are, perhaps, the most conspicuous evidence of growth of an institution, and it is significant that, under President Gillis's leadership, Rice has undertaken more construction of new buildings and renovation of older facilities than it has during any other 10-year span. Fondren, itself has recently benefited from Rice's building boom with the opening of the state-of-the-art remote Library Service Center, greatly augmenting Fondren's storage capacity. In addition, construction of the Humanities Building and renovations to Rayzor and Herring Halls have provided offices for humanities faculty formerly housed in Fondren, freeing space within the library.

Fundraising and building construction may be prominent in the public eye, but academics and research are of principal concern for a university, and in this regard, President Gillis has been a champion for all disciplines. He consistently has promoted the humanities and social sciences as no less important than the hard sciences and engineering to contemporary life and endeavor—or to a great university engaged in advancing knowledge and understanding.

Equally important, Dr. Gillis has been a president of vision, constantly preparing Rice for the challenges of the century to come. Interdisciplinary initiatives and programs, now commonplace in American universities and colleges, were not so 10 years ago when President Gillis began touting them as the future of research. In particular, he has encouraged endeavors that bridge the cultures of science/engineering and social sciences/humanities, melding scientific advancement with a humanist context.

Collaborative efforts between Rice and partners in higher education, industry, and government are logical extensions of interdisciplinary programs and have been another principal focus of Dr. Gillis's presidency. Collaborative efforts between Rice and various institutions of the Texas Medical Center, for example, have increased from just a handful in the early 1990s to more than 80 today.

Through these initiatives and others, President Gillis has led Rice to be an educational force that transcends the boundaries of city, state, and nation. He encouraged expansion of the Continuing Studies program, which has grown during the past decade into one of the largest continuing education programs in the state. He has fostered Rice's educational outreach—at last count, Rice is engaged in approximately 60 formalized programs with K–12 schools in Houston, Galveston, and the Rio Grande Valley.

Internationalization of Rice has been an-

other of President Gillis's priorities, and the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy is a leading model for the university's deepening role on the international stage. Although founded before President Gillis took office, the Baker Institute has seen its entire development take place during his administration, and in that time, it has become one of the country's premier policy think tanks. Also of particular international note: In 1997, President Gillis helped guide the founding of International University Bremen, Germany, by lending advisors, resources, and educational expertise. Modeled on Rice, IUB opened its doors to students in fall 2001, and this year it graduates its first class.

Closer to home, President Gillis has remained a strong advocate for underrepresented minorities at Rice. Right from the beginning of his presidency, he made diversity one of his principal concerns, creating, for example, the President's Council on Minority Affairs, which involves students, faculty, and administrators. He also initiated the Office of Minority Community Affairs, which works, in part, to enhance the relationships between minority communities and the university. As a result of President Gillis's support, Rice created a Hispanic alumni group, and since he took office, the number of tenured Mexican American professors increased from one to seven. Today, Rice regularly ranks among the top colleges and universities for Hispanic students, and this year, Rice admitted a record-number of Hispanic students.

It is impossible to speak of President Gillis's accomplishments without also talking about Elizabeth Gillis. In May 2000, the Rice Board of Trustees established the Elizabeth Gillis Award for Exemplary Service to Rice in her honor and naming her as its first recipient. In announcing the award, the board heralded Mrs. Gillis for demonstrating an "exceptional standard of service" by "volunteering countless hours to the university in everything from graciously extending Rice hospitality to visiting world leaders to quietly nurturing the Rice Women's Mentoring Program to loyally cheering the Owl athletic teams."

The trustees also noted that Elizabeth Gillis has treated the Rice family as her own. "She has shared her home and table," the board resolution read, "with students, staff, faculty, trustees, and their spouses for events that raise morale, generate goodwill, and expand knowledge of the accomplishments, initiatives, and excitement of Rice University."

Among her many activities on behalf of the university, Mrs. Gillis has been involved with the Faculty Women's Club and has served on the board of the Shepherd Society. She is credited with suggesting the creation of the Alumni College, not only broadening Rice's educational outreach but providing a means for alumni to stay personally connected to the university's educational mission. An associate at Brown College, she also has been very involved with athletics, attending almost all sports events. She and President Gillis have been long-time hosts of the Friends of Fondren pre-gala cocktail party, and she currently serves on the board of Friends of Fondren Library.

A university that claims to be one of the best must constantly prove itself in word and deed, and for more than a decade, Malcolm and Elizabeth Gillis have led Rice by example. Their dedication, hard work, and ability to create a vision and inspire others have had a deep and lasting impact on Rice University and Fondren Library.

We are honored to call them our Friends.

Shawn and Yvonne Reed, Elizabeth Gillis, and Barbara Mack

Dennis Huston, Cathryn Rodd, and Doug Selman

Bucky Allshouse and Lynn Elsenhans

Texas Anderson and John Polking

Lew Eatherton, Truett Latimer, Julius Glickman, and Norman Reynolds

Nancy Eubank and Robert Cargill

Terry and Beverly Koonce

Mary Catherine Miller, Ray Watkin Strange, and Geraldine Priest

Auctioneers John Wolf and Bucky Allshouse

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Friends of Fondren Honor Lee and Glenn Seureau at 2004 FOFL/REA Homecoming Brunch

On November 6, 2004, the Friends of Fondren Library and the Rice Engineering Alumni co-hosted the annual Homecoming Brunch. Margaret Jordan, Friends of Fondren board member and event chair, welcomed a standing-room-only crowd. Margaret introduced Justin Singer '01, president of the Rice Engineering Alumni, who first presented the 2004 Outstanding Young Engineering Alumna Award to Theodora Overfelt Pounds '96. He then presented two Outstanding Engineering Alumnus Awards for 2004 to Dr. Stephen J. Sheafor '72 and to John R. Treichler '69.

Margaret introduced Karen Rogers, who presented the Friends of Fondren Library award for outstanding service to the Friends and the library to her good friends Lee and Glenn Seureau.

Clifford and Becky Chatham, Sabrina and Glenn Seureau, Caroline Jinks, Lee and Glenn Seureau, Suzanna Jinks

"Because we are all three from Houston, people assume that we have known each other all of our lives and while I feel like that's the case, I actually first met Lee and Glenn Seureau in November of 1993 at the Class of 1933's 60th reunion, a rather unlikely gathering for any of us. I was representing my mom, Leota Meyer Hess, who had died in '91. Lee had been asked by Harry Chavanne to be the guest speaker. Her father Lee Chatham, Rice class of '23, had been director of the Rice Band during his student years up until

1937 and had had a very popular dance band, Lee's Owls. On Glenn's advice to "be organized" Lee had carefully prepared her remarks on index cards but on the way in she dropped them so she was "organized" in the wrong order. I need to mention at this stage that Lee and Glenn are - or were – both University of Texas Longhorns. We became good friends and Lee offered to help a group of alumni and friends start the Rice Historical Society, which we unashamedly modeled after the very successful Friends of Fondren Library. After this group was launched and we had persuaded the Seureaus that they could be Longhorns and Owls at the same time, Lee got interested in the Friends of Fondren Library. One of our challenges about that time was finding a year-round storage facility for the books we were collecting for our book sale. Glenn graciously offered space at their car dealership, Star Motor Cars. Not only have they let us store the books there for many years, their staff has been made available to assist all of the donors and volunteers even though we sometimes look like street people after sorting books for half a day. Lee has served on the Fondren board from 1997, and with Glenn's help, has chaired the Rice authors' reception, the annual meeting, the book sale and the gala where we honored all the past presidents of the Friends and celebrated our 50th anniversary. Lee and Glenn have supported the Fondren gala every year and have been enthusiastic donors to and purchasers from the auction. Lee has even convinced our very generous friend from France to donate vacation time at her farm in Normandy. Lee has helped me with numerous dinners I donated to the auction even if she didn't know at the time that she was going to. She has also served 2 terms as secretary of our organization. We want to thank Lee and Glenn for their many kindnesses to our organization and to each of us personally. Our book sale would not be possible without their generosity."

Margaret Jordan and Mary Lee Burrus

Justin Singer, Theodora Overfelt Pounds, Stephen Sheafor, and John Treichler

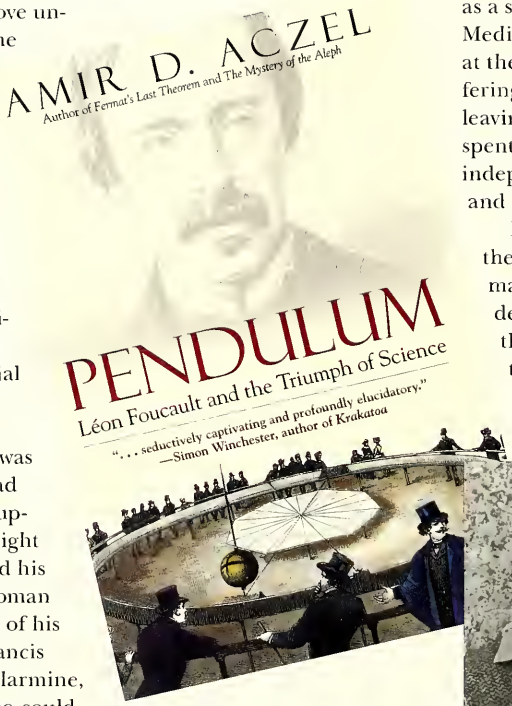
Bookmark

Pendulum. Leon Foucault and the Triumph of Science

by Amir D. Aczel.
(Atria Books. New York. 2003)

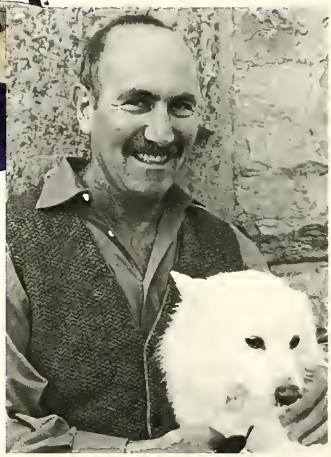
Review by John C. Ribble, M.D.

"I felt the earth move under my feet" declare the words of a popular song. Funny, we never actually perceive the rotation of the earth. Does it really spin? How do we know it does? Both Copernicus and Galileo inferred from astronomical data and computations that our terrestrial ball makes a complete turn around its axis once a day, but where was the physical proof? Had Galileo been able to supply this evidence he might have been able to avoid his difficulties with the Roman Catholic Church. One of his Inquisitors, Robert Francis Romulus Cardinal Bellarmine, admitted that if Galileo could present tangible proof that the earth rotated, the Church would reconsider its charges against him. Compelling scientific evidence from observations of the stars continued to strengthen the theory, but not until two centuries after Galileo, in 1851, did Foucault demonstrate physical evidence of the rotation of the earth. A Jesuit priest writing in the 1920s reported that Foucault's demonstration, and nothing else, convinced the Church that the earth rotates.



Amir D. Aczel, also the author of *Fermat's Last Theorem*, tells the story of Foucault's scientific observations and inventions, and his relationship to the Parisian intellectual and scientific community of the mid 19th century. Jean Bernard Leon Foucault (1819-1868) was a sickly child and not a promising student; however, he was good with his hands and as a boy built a telegraph and several ingenious toys. His mother was convinced that his dexterity fitted him for surgery, and he enrolled as a student in the Faculty of Medicine at Paris. His revulsion at the sight of blood and the suffering of sick persons led to his leaving medical school and he spent the rest of his life as an independent applied scientist and inventor.

His lack of interest in theory, weakness in advanced mathematics and meager academic credentials prompted the Parisian scientific elite to snub Foucault. Nevertheless, this "scientific irregular" working independent-



Amir D. Aczel

ly with great application and industry continued to pursue a scientific career. He improved the chemical process of developing daguerreotypes, shortening the required exposure time from 30 minutes to 20 seconds. Foucault demonstrated that light traveled more slowly in water than in air. His measurement of the speed of light is virtually the same as the value adopted today. However, the work for which he is best known is low-tech, required little mathematics and was carried out in his basement on the left bank in Paris with a piece of wire six and a half feet long suspending a cast iron weight.

Foucault observed that when he set his homemade pendulum into back-and-forth motion the plane of its movement seemed gradually to rotate clockwise returning to the original plane of oscillation in a period of just under 32 hours. He reckoned, and it has since been shown to be the case, that the length of time needed to come full circle depends upon the geographical location of the pendulum. At the North and South Poles the plane of the swing completes a circuit in 24 hours. The periodicity is related to the latitude and can be calculated as 24 hours divided by the sine of the latitude -- a mathematical relationship that Foucault discovered. In Houston at about latitude 30 degrees, the complete circuit of the pendulum should be completed in about 48 hours. (You can test this for yourself with Foucault's pendulums that are available from scientific supply houses.)

Foucault realized, where others before him had failed to, that in actuality the plane of movement of the pendulum did NOT change at all. The apparent change was the result of the earth's, and consequently the observer's, counterclockwise rotation while the plane of the pendulum's swings actually stayed the same. This explanation is widely accepted as physical evidence of the rotation of the earth. Foucault, building on what he had learned from the pendulum, expanded his experiments to rotational motion and subsequently developed the gyroscope.

The most magnificent example of Foucault's pendulum can be seen in the Pantheon in Paris where the shiny brass bob is suspended at the end of a wire 220 feet long attached at the height of the dome of that imposing building. There is a Foucault's pendulum in the lobby of the General Assembly Building at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The pendulum at the Conservatoire des Arts et Metiers in Paris is featured in Umberto Eco's novel, *Foucault's Pendulum*.

I was prompted to read this book because we recently spent some time in the Pantheon and I was not at all sure I understood the basis for the observed movement of the pendulum. This book, by the author of *Fermat's Last Theorem*, is written in laymen's language and presents a fairly clear explanation of the pendulum's behavior and assesses the importance of this discovery. Foucault's achievements as a scientist are described in the context of the intellectual, scientific, and political scene in the Paris of his time. There is an interesting account of his relationship to Napoleon III who gave substantial support to Foucault. Other biographical information is sketchy and does not give a full picture of Foucault's personal life. What comes through clearly are the remarkable accomplishments of a self-taught "irregular" scientist who knew what made the world go 'round.

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Saturday, April 2, 2005

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Tuesday, May 24, 2005

The Friends of Fondren Annual Meeting will be Tuesday, May 24, at Cohen House. The evening will begin with a reception, followed by dinner and program.

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